

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 10-14, 20, 21 and 23 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 3, 4, 10, 12-14, 20 and 23 were amended, and claims 2, 5-9, 15-19 and 22 were canceled. No claims were added. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

In this Amendment, Applicants have amended certain claims and canceled other claims from consideration in this application. Applicants are not conceding that the subject matter encompassed by the claims prior to this Amendment is not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner. The claims were amended and canceled in this Amendment solely to facilitate expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue claims, including the subject matter encompassed by the claims as presented prior to this Amendment and additional claims in one or more continuing applications.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 102, Anticipation

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 10-14, 17, 20, 21 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Anders et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,996,599 (hereinafter “Anders”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

By the present Amendment, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claims 8 and 9, and independent claim 12 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claims 18 and 19. The Examiner has indicated that claims 9 and 19 would be allowed if rewritten into independent form incorporating the subject matter of any intervening claims, and claims 1 and 12, accordingly, should be allowed. Independent claim 22 has been amended in a similar manner as claims 1 and 12 and should also be allowed. Claims 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 14, 20 and 21 depend from and further restrict one of claims 1 and 12 and should be allowed as well. Claims 2 and 17 have been canceled and the rejection with respect to those claims is, accordingly, now moot.

Therefore, the rejection of claims 1-4, 10-14, 17, 20, 21 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 has been overcome.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 103, Obviousness

The Examiner has rejected claims 5, 6, 8, 15, 16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Anders in view of Schairer et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,611,861 (hereinafter “Schairer”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5, 6, 8, 15, 16 and 18 have been canceled. Therefore, the rejection with respect to those claims is now moot.

Therefore, the rejection of claims 5, 6, 8, 15, 16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 has been overcome.

III. Objection to Claims

The Examiner has stated that claims 9 and 19 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As indicated above, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claims 8 and 9, and independent claim 12 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claims 18 and 19. In addition, independent claim 22 has been amended in a similar manner as claims 1 and 12.

Therefore, the objection to the claims has been overcome.

IV. Conclusion

It is urged that the subject application is now in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the Examiner so find and issue a Notice of Allowance in due course..

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,

/Gerald H. Glanzman/

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